

APR 3 1961

Circ.: m. 1209,781
S. 257,144

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Date: APR 3 1961

Fascist Or Liberal Agency? Birch Society Is Discussed

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Two Memphis State University professors last night gave opposing statements on the John Birch Society, an anti-communist organization recruiting members in the Mid-South.

Dr. Charles T. Gaisser, assistant professor of European history and formerly voluntary co-ordinator for the John Birch Society in Memphis, states the case for the organization. Prof. Enoch Mitchell, head of MSU's history department, opposes the society.

For The Society—

By DR. CHARLES T. GAISSER

The John Birch Society is a truly liberal body fostering more individual responsibility and less government.

It sees in totalitarianism of any sort—communist, fascist or other—the main threat to religion and to civilization. It believes that the United States, while fighting communist totalitarianism, is itself leaning toward some totalitarian usages. Too great a centralization of power, not only in government but in most areas of national life.

The society hopes to correct this penchant by informing its members and the whole public

about prospective actions of government and by stimulating a flow of communication to Congress for or against these actions.

Reflecting Emersonian philosophy, the society believes

that the "end pre-exists in the means," and that bad means achieve only bad ends. The society believes in the free and open competition of ideas, therefore deploring secrecy, espionage and subversion.

The public has a standing invitation to interested persons to attend any organizational meeting. The individual member is free to resign at any time and may be dismissed at any time.

As individuals, members do as they please. Neither members or chapters, as members of chapters, take any action without official sanction, or affiliate the name of John Birch without permission.

Not Alter Ego

The society is not the institution

Against The Society—

PROF ENOCH MITCHELL

I am opposed to the John Birch Society because I think it is outright fascist and totalitarian.

It is nonsense to call it "liberal" when its Blue Book, the universally acknowledged guidebook of the society, calls it "monolithic," "authoritative" and semi-secret.

I am against the John Birch Society because it uses smear tactics, sets citizen against citizen and is a form of pseudo-intellectual vigilantism.

Citizens Stunned

How the John Birch Society operates was clearly shown in Nashville, Santa Barbara, Calif., and Wichita, Kan., where telephone calls were used in a campaign to smear citizens who did not agree with the views of the John Birchers.

The tone of the John Birch Society is set by its founder Robert Welch, a retired Massachusetts candy manufacturer. He wrote a pamphlet branding such men as former Presidents Truman, Roosevelt and Eisenhower as communists or fellow-travelers. For good measure Welch lumped in the late Secretary of State Dulles, his brother Allen, head of the Central Intelligence Agency, and Gen. George Marshall.

Several Memphis members of the John Birch Society insist they do not agree with the views of the great American statesmen and patriots. If this is true, the



Prof. Mitchell



Dr. Gaisser